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SUBJECT: SPAIN REGISTERS CONCERN WITH HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

1. The Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs requested a meeting to discuss GOS concerns with this year's Human Rights Report. Poloffs met March 29 with Manuel de la Camara Hermoso, MFA Deputy Director of North American Affairs, and Jose Antonio de Ory Peral, MFA Director General of Human Rights. De la Camara and de Ory emphasized that they respected the USG human rights reports that the USG produced and they found the reports "fair and balanced" but were concerned that this year the report's tone was slightly more negative with respect to Spain than in previous years. They presented poloffs with a non-paper detailing GOS concerns about the report. We faxed a copy of the non-paper to EUR/WE on March 30. We told our interlocutors we would relay the GOS's concerns to Washington.

2. Most of the concerns consist of slight changes in descriptive language from the previous year's human rights report. For example, a phrase from the 2003 Human Rights Report for Spain that states, "There were allegations a few members of the security forces abused detainees and mistreated foreigners and illegal immigrants." The 2004 Human Rights Report adds the word "credible" before "allegations."

3. The GOS was also concerned about the mention of the government closing the Basque newspaper, Euskalunon Egunkaria, because of its links to ETA in the 2004 report. The February 2003 closing of the newspaper was first reported in the 2003 Human Rights Report for Spain. The 2004 Human Rights Report for Spain mentions three additional four-month extensions of the newspaper's closing. De la Camara and de Ory called this reporting erroneous because the paper was closed by a court order and not the executive branch of the Spanish government, which in their view means it was not closed by "the government."

MANZANARES